

PROGRAMME

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**WOLVERHAMPTON
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

CONCERT
AT
NEW ROAD METHODIST CHURCH
STOURBRIDGE

SATURDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2000
MARCH

PROGRAMME

Girl Crazy Overture.....Gershwin
Songs of the Auvergne.....Canteloube

INTERVAL

Suite for Orchestra.....Rory Freckleton
Soirees Musicales.....Rossini (arranged Britten)
Carmen Suite number 1.....Bizet

Solo Soprano Sarah Westwood
Conductor Michael Darke
Leader Ros Rayner

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra is a fully independent amateur orchestra formed in 1973 by a group of keen amateur players. The idea behind the formation of the orchestra was to satisfy a need for local musicians to prepare to as high a standard as possible interesting works for public performance, and this is still the primary aim of the orchestra today. Membership of the orchestra when at full strength is of the order of 50 players and is drawn from keen competent amateur musicians, students and teachers of music in Wolverhampton and the surrounding areas.

The orchestra meets on a regular weekly basis throughout the academic year and produces on average six public concerts a year. It has been invited on a number of occasions to perform major choral works with local choral societies, last year performing Beethoven's Choral Symphony to commemorate its Silver Jubilee. The orchestra regularly engages as soloists professional musicians of national and international reputation as well as local young players of outstanding promise.

The repertoire of the orchestra spans from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, although a symphony orchestra of this type will tend to concentrate on works from the nineteenth century. The orchestra has performed a large number of symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms, Dvorak, Mahler, Schubert, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky etc. Earlier works are represented by Albinoni, Bach, Boyce and Handel whereas twentieth century composers whose works have been performed include Barber, Copland, Joubert, Stravinsky, Meirion Williams (a former musical director of the

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orchestra) and Rory Freckleton, whose "Suite for Orchestra" is being performed in tonight's concert.

The orchestra is managed by a committee consisting of the Musical Director, his Deputy and the Leader plus members elected by the orchestra. It is financed through concert receipts and an annual subscription payed by the members. It is also affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies

SARAH WESTWOOD - Soprano

We are delighted to welcome Sarah back for her fifth concert as soloist with us.

Sarah graduated from Birmingham Conservatoire with a BA (Hons) degree in music, specialising in performance. She then continued her postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music. Whilst there, she received a Highly commended in the Vincent Leider prize. She has taken part in masterclasses with Robert Tear, Paul Esswood and Valerie Masterson, graduating with a recital diploma in June 1996.

Sarah performs regularly around the country and recent engagements have included a concert of baroque music with the Borromini Ensemble in Birmingham Cathedral, Warwick Arts Centre and the Hollywell Music Room, Oxford. She also teaches singing at Hereford Cathedral School.

Sarah has been a member of the violin section of the Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra on several occasions. She lives with her husband Paul (another former WSO member) and their daughters Lydia and Freya in South Shropshire.

The actions of the first act occur in and around Custerville while the second act takes place in Mexico, providing some musical spice. Eventually, through the love of a good woman (Molly), Danny becomes a reformed character and all live happily ever after.

In *Girl Crazy*, George and Ira Gershwin turned one of our best ever scores. The show opened at the Alvin Theatre on 14th October 1930 with George conducting the opening night. It was an instant hit, the verve of the music keeping it triumphantly alive, despite the fact that the story line was by this time old-fashioned and over familiar, complete with love-gone-wrong at the end of the first act and a happy reconciliation at the end of the second. Songs included in the overture are *Embracable You* (salvaged from the aborted "East is West" and the hit song of the show), *I Got Rhythm* (which Merman introduced and thrust her into instant stardom), *Mexican Dance Scene*, *But Not For Me* and *Bronco Busters*.

J. Bell

SONGS OF THE AUVERGNE

Marie-Joseph Canteloube de Malaret
(1879 - 1957)

Series 1:

- I *La Pastoura als Camps*
(The shepherdess in the fields)
- II *Bailèro*
- III *Trois Bourrees:*
 - a) *L'aio de Rosts*
(Spring water)

- b) *Ound'onoren Gorda?*
(Where shall we go?)
- c) *Obal dins lou Limouzi*
(Down in Limousin)

Series 3:

- I *Lo Fiolare*
(The spinner)
- II *Passo pel Prat*
(Come by the meadow)
- III *Lou Boussu*
(The hunchback)
- IV *Brezairola*
(Lullaby)
- V *Malurous qu'o uno Fenno*
(Wretched the man who has a wife)

Canteloube was born in the Ardeche of an Auvergnat father and a mother from the Cevennes, and developed a passionate lifelong attachment to rural France and its music. Although many of his own works show this devotion, he is almost entirely known as a collector and arranger of folksong, particularly the five books of the *Songs of the Auvergne* which date from 1923 onwards. Indeed, without his efforts, much of this priceless heritage may well have become lost forever.

Series 1 and 3 will be sung here tonight in the original Auvergne dialect, as noted down by Canteloube, although he provided an alternative text in standard French. Being country songs, they deal with fairly earthy matters. The most famous is *Bailero* in which the shepherd and shepherdess sing to each other across the mountain pastures. The melody is very beautiful and

Canteloube's skilful use of the orchestra provides an evocative setting.

Throughout the songs, the brass, limited to horns and trumpets is sparingly used, while the wind often play a dominant role as in folk music. This is often of a virtuosic nature as exemplified by the oboe and clarinet cadenzas that separate the three *Bourees* in Book 1. The strings are frequently used to provide a shimmering haze reminiscent of the open spaces and vast skies of the Auvergne, and it is interesting that a piano, rather than a harp, is used to provide the final decorative touches.

M. Darke

INTERVAL

SUITE FOR ORCHESTRA

Rory Freckleton

- I *Allegro*
- II *Larghetto*
- III *Allegro con brio*

Rory Freckleton originally wrote this as a competition entry for brass quintet. It is a most enjoyable piece with a strongly pastoral flavour. This is what Rory has to say about it:

"Oh no!" I hear you sigh "We've got to sit through some modern plinkety-plonkety rubbish now". Well rubbish it might be, but at least I hope you will find it tuneful rubbish.

This "Suite for Orchestra" started life over 15 years ago as a piece for Brass Quintet. However it was never really satisfactory in that form. When entered for the Stroud Festival Composition class in 1984, it was returned with the peremptory note that "Wind players need to breathe occasionally". In 1997 I altered and orchestrated it in the arrangement you will hear tonight. The music has no definite programme and you are free to interpret the emotion of the music as you wish.

The first movement is at a steady pace and of a fairly sunny disposition. Perhaps it might remind you of walking in the countryside. Every now and then the trumpets encourage us to stop and admire the view, The movement ends in a happy frame of mind as the walker gradually fades into the distance, thinking of the joys of companionship or simply the prospect of a nice cup of tea!

The second movement is slow. The horn entries at the start might evoke a landscape before dawn when the spirits of a bygone age return to haunt their former hunting grounds. Their pleading gives way to a more animated section which finally resolves with a solo flute and violin suggesting that sunrise has restored serenity to the scene.

The third and final movement is fast and may suggest the rush and pace of everyday life. The final chords have died away when you suddenly realize "This is where I came in!"

I am grateful to the Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra for performing this piece for a second time."

SOIREES MUSICALES

Suite of Movements by Gioachino Rossini (1792 - 1868)
Arranged by Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976)

- I March
- II Canzonetta
- III Tirolese
- IV Bolero
- V Tarantella

After the enormously successful premier of his masterpiece *William Tell* at the Paris Opera in 1829, Rossini wrote no more works for stage. His original intention was to continue to compose for Paris - a setting of *Faust* was a distinct possibility for a while - but various factors dissuaded him. The huge popularity of the sensational works of Meyerbeer and Halevy, together with what Rossini viewed as a decline in the standard of singing, both represented changes in the operatic world which he was bound to deplore. Rossini was also dismayed by the increasing butchery to which *William Tell* was being subjected. These reasons, combined with growing ill health, prevented him from following those interesting paths opened up by his last operas.

During the remaining thirty nine years of his life, Rossini continued to write occasional items for singers, social gatherings and musical evenings (soirees) held regularly at his house. The music was a very Rossinian blend of salon, folk and operatic styles in which the composer's acute ear for the possibilities of the voice and his own considerable sophistication as a pianist are everywhere apparent. In 1835 Truopenas persuaded Rossini to

publish these as a group of eight chamber arias and four chamber duets all with piano accompaniment under the title *Les Soirees Musicales*.

Many composers made arrangements of this group of short pieces, Britten arranging them into two suites in the early years of his career with a dazzling orchestration which would surely have delighted Rossini. *Soirees musicales* was arranged in 1936 and has five movements drawn mainly from Rossini's *Les Soirees Musicales*, but beginning with a portion of the ballet music from *William Tell*.

J. Bell

CARMEN SUITE No. 1

Georges Bizet
(1838 - 1875)

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I | <i>Prelude to Act I:</i> | <i>The sombre theme foretelling the tragic outcome of Don Jose's love for Carmen.</i> |
| II | <i>Aragonaise:</i> | <i>Prelude to Act IV.</i> |
| III | <i>Intermezzo:</i> | <i>Prelude to Act III.</i> |
| IV | <i>Seguedille:</i> | <i>Act I.</i> |
| V | <i>Les dragons d'Alcala:</i> | <i>Prelude to Act II.</i> |
| VI | <i>Les Toreadors:</i> | <i>Introduction to Act I.</i> |

One of the admirers of Bizet's *Carmen* wrote of its "perilous proximity to everyday life" and it is not too difficult to imagine, instead of Seville in 1820, a modern setting where a young man in a safe job, due to marry his neighbourhood sweetheart, is blown off course by the promise of the passionate embraces of an exotic girl from another culture, with tragic consequences.

In the opera the man is Don Jose, a corporal of dragoons, and his intended is Micaela, sweet and staid, who brings money and messages from his mother in the Basque region. Carmen, a sexy, carefree gypsy, treats men as playthings, and when she sings "si je t'aime, prends garde a toi!" ("if I love you, watch out!") in the famous Habanera, she means it. Unfortunately for Don Jose her attentions alight on him, although at first he ignores them.

In outline, the story of the opera is as follows. Carmen is arrested for brawling and Don Jose is ordered to take her to gaol. She promises him her favours if he releases her and meets her later at Lillas Pastia's tavern. The now infatuated dragoon acquiesces but their rendezvous is delayed for a month because Don Jose is gaoled himself for this offence. When they meet, the delighted Carmen sings and dances for him, but as she does so, the cornets sound the retreat to barracks.

Don Jose, who expects to get the best of both worlds, prepares to depart. Frustrated, an enraged Carmen asks him to desert his duties and carry her off to a life of freedom. He refuses but as he leaves is fatefully confronted by his lieutenant who is also seeking Carmen. They fight, and now hopelessly compromised, Don Jose joins Carmen and her smuggler cronies.

True to form, Carmen soon transfers her attentions to the flashy Toreador, Escamillo. One fancies that she takes to him because his dicing with death in the bullring strikes a chord with her fateful gypsy instincts. She refuses to be alarmed by Don Jose's threats of violence and deserts him for her new lover.

The tragic outcome occurs outside the Seville bullring; inside Escamillo is fighting a bull, while outside Carmen recklessly refuses the desperate pleas of Don Jose to return to him. He plunges the knife into her as the crowd is heard acclaiming Escamillo as he kills the bull.

Carmen was first produced at the Paris Opera-Comique in March 1875 and its realism caused a scandal. But the emotionally charged quality of the work and Bizet's brilliant use of local colour eventually won over an initially sceptical music world. Of his eight published operas *Carmen* was Bizet's masterpiece. It was also his last. Bizet died suddenly from a heart condition only three months after its premier. With his death, a career just coming to maturity was cut short.

Programme note by Ben Bickman. This note was supplied through the Programme Note Bank of the National Federation of Music Societies.

WOLVERHAMPTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Ros Rayner
Jessica Barnett
Barbara Bostock
Julianne Bourne
Richard Lane
Jennie Lewis

Violin 2

Jo Jordan
Michael Clement
K Hawkins
Margaret Myatt
Philip Ward
Monica Woodall

Viola

Alain Anderton
Rory Freckleton
Jenny Wyatt

Cello

Jo Bell
Margaret Bell
Glyn Davies
Gaynor Deveraux
Tim Forster
Alan Mumberson
Julie Robertson

Double Bass

Joanna Hughes

Flute

Diana Manasseh
Heather Lancaster

Oboe

Richard Anderson
Rachel Orotayo

Cor Anglais

Rachel Orotayo

Clarinet

Di Cotterell
Ros Jacom

Bassoon

Jill Sparke
Doug Servant

Horn

Percy Cotterell
Robin Hopper
Sara Robertshaw
Eric large

Trumpet

Chris Cumming
Chris Jordan

Trombone

Laurence Hopper

Bass Trombone

Don Howard

Percussion

Ian Richards

Harp

Stephanie Roberts

Piano

Ken Gange

OUR NEXT CONCERT

Mozart : Marriage of Figaro Overture
Barber: Adagio for Strings
Richard Strauss: Wind Serenade
Dvorak: Symphony number 9 "From the New World"

Saint Matthew's Church
Willenhall Road
Wolverhampton

7.30pm, Saturday 1st July 2000

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Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra
is affiliated to the
National Federation of Music Societies
which represents and supports
amateur vocal, instrumental and
promoting services throughout the
United Kingdom.

*Wolverhampton Symphony Orchestra is a registered charity, number 1040991
and is a member of the National Federation of Music Societies.*

For more details of the orchestra, visit our web site at
<http://listen.to/wso>
Tell us your views, e-mail us at wolsymorc@hotmail.com

CALLING ALL STRING PLAYERS!!!

You may be interested to know that we are holding a string weekend on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st May 2000 at The King's School, Regis Road, Tettenhall.

We will be playing the following;

Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis by Britten
Holberg Suite by Greig
Adagio for Strings by Barber.

This will be a rare opportunity to have a play through some exciting string works and get to know some members of your local orchestra. Who knows, you may even wish to boost orchestral numbers permanently!

If you are interested in participating, or knows someone else who may be, please give Joannè Bell (publicity officer) a ring on 01902 664943 and she will let you know all the details.